115ᵗʰ Congress Begins with Republican Effort to Repeal the Affordable Care Act

As the 115th Congress convenes, and with Republicans in control of both the House and Senate, Republican leadership has made repealing the Affordable Care Act their first order of business. Yet despite years of promising to "repeal and replace" the ACA, Republicans are still no closer to offering an alternative plan to protect the millions of Americans who would lose their health coverage and the millions more who would see costs increase and benefits eroded.

"Congressional Republicans have long boasted that once they claim the reins of power, they will act quickly and decisively to roll back what they view as the most onerous piece of President Obama's domestic agenda: the Affordable Care Act… **[W]hile Republicans are determined to rapidly repeal as much of Obamacare as they can, they have not settled on a replacement plan or on when that plan should take effect**. " [Washington Post, 1/2/2017]

Their "repeal and delay" plan is a charade and means repeal with no replacement. Their fellow colleagues agree it would be an irresponsible move:

Sen. Rand Paul: "We need to think through how we do this, and it's a huge mistake for Republicans if they do not vote for replacement on the same day as we vote for repeal." [Politico, 1/4/17]

Repealing the Affordable Care Act would have devastating consequences for millions of American families and would "Make America Sick Again":

Kicking Millions of Americans Off of Their Health Coverage and Unraveling the Insurance Market
- **30 million Americans would lose their health coverage** in 2019 if the ACA is repealed without a replacement. [Urban Institute, 12/16]
  - 82 percent of those losing coverage would be working families.
- The number of uninsured children would **double to more than 4 million**. [CBPP, 12/22/16]

Increasing Health Costs for Millions More
- The Republican plan to repeal the ACA and delay a replacement would **increase premiums by 20 percent or more**. [Brookings, 12/13/16]
- It would **significantly raise taxes on 7 million low- and moderate-income families** due to the loss of their premium tax credits to buy coverage through the marketplace. [Tax Policy Center, 12/15/16]
- **Americans with employer-based coverage could see their health care costs increase**:

- o Since the enactment of the ACA, employer-based coverage premiums have grown at a rate of 5% annually, compared to 7.9% in the decade prior. As a result, the average premium is $3,600 lower than it would be if the pre-ACA growth rate had sustained. [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities]

Eroding Benefits for Middle Class Families and Putting Insurance Companies Back in Charge
- Americans would **lose consumer protections**, such as the **elimination of annual and lifetime limits** on coverage. [CNN, 1/2/17]
  - o Additionally:
    - Americans could be denied coverage due to pre-existing conditions. [HHS]
    - Young adults would be removed from their parent's coverage at the age of 19, instead of 26. [HHS]
    - Preventative health services would not be required to be provided at no-charge. [HHS]
    - Women could be charged more for health coverage simply because of their gender. [HHS]

Undermining Medicare
- Repealing the ACA would **increase Medicare spending by $802 billion** over 10 years, meaning **higher premiums and deductibles** for the 57 million seniors and disabled Americans currently enrolled in the program. [CNN, 1/2/17]
- Dismantling the ACA would **reinstitute the "donut hole"** in prescription drug coverage, forcing **seniors to pay more out of pocket** for prescriptions. [CNN, 1/2/17]

Damaging Local Hospitals
- Repealing the Affordable Care Act "could lead to **massive service cuts, layoffs and hospital closures** if an adequate replacement is not developed." [Modern Healthcare, 12/6/16]

Worsening the Opioid Epidemic
- Repealing the Medicaid expansion would **take away coverage from roughly 1.6 million newly insured individuals** with substance use disorders. [Health Affairs, 12/16]

Increasing the Deficit
- Repealing the ACA will **add $350 billion to the deficit**. [Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, 1/4/17]

Democrats will fight Republican efforts to create chaos in our health care system and Make America Sick Again, and we will work to protect the millions of Americans who have benefited from the patient protections and cost savings that are the result of the Affordable Care Act.